

with my plans, determined not to be put down. Assistance gradually increased—improvements were made every day—and to-day a train which started from London in the morning has brought me in the afternoon to my native soil, and enabled me to take my place in this room, and see around me many faces which I have great pleasure in looking upon."

The competitors of Mr. Stephenson for the premium of 500*l.* offered in 1829 by the new Liverpool and Manchester Railway Company for the best locomotive engine were Mr. Burstall (or Burstall and Hill), Messrs. Braithwaite and Ericson, and Mr. Hackworth. Burstall's locomotive, the *Perseverance*, was withdrawn: it was made for locomotion on turnpike roads, on which it had repeatedly run with success previously, as we happen to know, although we cannot now recall the precise reason why it was withdrawn at a critical moment, when, had its parts been properly re-adjusted on the ground, we cannot doubt but that it would have run, as it did before, and well too—better far, of course, than it had already done, even on the rougher and more trying track of a common road. It was, indeed, the fruit of much perseverance and more cash, and, in all probability, lost its place in the grand race of renown by the mischance of some mere accident.* The other two locomotives, the *Noelley* and the *Sanspareil*, broke down, while Mr. Stephenson's *Rocket* outran the requirements of the Directors, averaged 15 miles an hour in speed, won the prize, and ushered in "the greatest mechanical revolution effected since the invention of the steam-engine by Watt," and its more immediate fruits.†

The subsequent career of Mr. Stephenson was as rapid and as smooth as the railway locomotion which he had done so much to realise. He took the lead, of course, at once, in railway engineering, became an extensive locomotive manufacturer at Newcastle and a railway contractor, a great colliery and iron-work owner, particularly at Claycross, and, in prosperous and money-making conjunction with Mr. Hudson, in a manner made our great railway system, as they themselves, in a money-making sense, were made by it.

The claims of Mr. Stephenson to the original idea of the Davy Lamp at one time excited a good deal of discussion; but whatever be the merits of that question, certainly Davy was a man of more originality of ideas, Stephenson more a man of happy talent in mechanical adaptation of ideas to useful and to noble purposes.‡

The present notice has really no pretension to the title of a memoir, however brief, our limited space having compelled us simply to form the idea of throwing together a few of the more prominent subjects of interest in the life of a remarkable man, who has done much for us all during a sojourn amongst us of but too brief duration had not his mission been fulfilled—his work accomplished.¶

run wild;" and in order to prevent his no less mad steam-engines from being let loose upon their cherished horse-foot railway project, they got two "rational engineers" to act as Commissioners de *l'Inquisition*, and report. The "candid engineers" accordingly investigated the subject, and, as "a very able document," proved most clearly that Mr. Stephenson's project was practically and commercially infeasible! Talent and enterprise, however, prevailed, and the horse plan was abandoned.

* In justice to Messrs. Borthwick, then merchants at Leith, we think it right, as we are sure Mr. Burstall could, here to record, that to their liberality as well as to his own talent, was he much indebted for the means of *perpetration*.

† In acknowledgment of Mr. Stephenson's claims in connection with railways, the Midland Company voted 2,000*l.* in 1845, to be expended in the presentation of a series of plate and the erection of a statue on the high-level bridge across the Tyne, the structure recently proposed to be called the Stephenson-bridge in honour of his memory, and seen to the left of the castle in the illustration of present number. Mr. Hudson, on whose motion the grant was made, stated that three other Companies—the York and North Midland, the Newcastle and Darlington, and the Newcastle and Berwick—would each vote a like sum.

‡ There was a powerful local feeling in favour of Mr. Stephenson's pretensions to the priority of invention. A committee was appointed to investigate the priority of the claims of the inventor of the safety lamp, and a public dinner was given by that committee to Mr. Stephenson, when a purse of a thousand guineas, and a silver tankard, were presented to him. In returning thanks, he announced his intention of devoting the money to the education of his son at the Edinburgh University. It is rather curious that, nearly thirty years afterwards, another piece of plate was presented to Dr. Clanny, as "the inventor of the safety lamp."

¶ "In private life," says a correspondent of the *Illustration*, he seemed the regard of all who appreciate worth and liberality, not less than ability. His habits were active, his conversation so vigorous that he was tempted occasionally to take undue liberties with it. His affections were warm, his manners frequently playful and vivacious, bearing that stamp of spontaneity indicative of the force of the feelings of the society of ladies, selected them commonly for conversation in mixed parties, where he could follow the bent of his in-

THE CATALOGUE OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

SIR,—Presuming that you have no objection to laying before your readers some additional remarks upon the "existing" catalogue of the British Museum, I commence by observing that the Lord Advocate must be wholly unacquainted with that chaotic mass, extending to upwards of sixty folio volumes; or else he must be in possession of a divining rod which enables him to discover at once under what title the work he is in search of lies concealed. By the help of such rod, a person who wanted for instance Cicognara's "*Fabbriche pittoresque di Venezia*," would, instead of looking for it under "*Cicognara*," or "*Fabbriche*," or "*Venezia*," turn at once to *Diedo*! Consulting the admirable "existing" catalogue, is pretty much like making a voyage of discovery; and though you are very likely to miss the object of your search, you may possibly stumble upon something else which you are glad to have found out, although you certainly would never have looked for it, and that for a very all-sufficient reason—ignorance of the existence of what so unexpectedly turns up. People cannot possibly look for books whose titles they never heard of; and if they occasionally meet with in the catalogue, by mere accident, some which they rejoice to learn are thereby rendered accessible, the exultation at such discovery is greatly damped by the reflection, that still greater treasures may lie for ever hidden from them in the mazes of the labyrinth yelped the catalogue.

Great, however, as are the inconveniences arising from the want of a classed catalogue, the latter is not likely to be provided at all the sooner on that account. It seems to be thought that readers at the Museum must by this time be just as well accustomed to those inconveniences as eels are to the being skinned alive. To many frequenters of the reading-rooms it is a matter of indifference whether the much-needed classification be ever undertaken or not, they knowing that, were it to be commenced forthwith, it could never be completed in their time; therefore they have no particular objection to others being subjected to the same inconveniences as they themselves have been forced to experience and submit to. Hardly needs it to be said that far other and more generous considerations ought to prevail in the management of so important and national an establishment as the library of the British Museum; and certainly the longer the task of forming a classed catalogue is delayed, all the more formidable and laborious will it become, owing to the continual accumulation of books.

One effect which a classed catalogue would have, would be to make manifest how exceedingly great are the deficiencies in some departments of literature, and how much others are crammed with what is comparatively worthless. Some foreign literatures are hardly represented at all in our national collection, not even all their standard writers and classical works being there to be found.

To confine myself to that branch of study in which you and your readers are most of all interested, architecture: the deficiencies there are not only great, but some of them quite unaccountable. That all foreign works of any note should not be purchased for the Museum is not, perhaps, very surprising; that it should not contain all modern English ones of the class, which may of course be claimed from their publishers, is, indeed, astonishing, not to

climatology, and was thrice married." He never hesitated to acknowledge the humbleness of his origin, but, on the contrary, displayed a manly pride in occasional reminiscences and contrasts. It is recorded of him that, in response, on one occasion, to the curiosity of a stranger lady, he said:—"Why, madam, they used to call our George Stephenson: I am now called, George Stephenson, Esquire, of Tipton House, near Chesterfield. And further let me say, that I've dined with princes, and peers, and commoners—with persons of all classes, from the humblest to the highest:—I've dined off a red herring when seated in a hedge-bottom, and have gone through the meanest drudgery. I've seen man kind in all its phases, and the conclusion I've arrived at is this—that if we were all stripped, there's not much difference." With all this plain-spoken bluntness, however, he appears to have had a spice of the courtier too, as another anecdote told of him would seem to betoken. "I tell you what, my lord duke," he said, on one occasion, while on a visit to the princely country seat of the Duke of Devonshire, "your Grace won't find the change, after all, so very great, when you get into Paradise." Above all his own engineering and other titles—and he had even been created a Knight of Leopold of Belgium (for railway services), and an F.R.S.—he is said to have specially cherished his title of founder and first president of the Society of Mechanical Engineers. His attention to the mental and temporal improvement of the workmen in his colonies (1,200 and upwards), is said to have been unremitting.

say incredible. Nevertheless, such is actually the case. Hardly will it be credited that our national library—one which does not disdain to give house-room to, and encumber its shelves with, children's books, school-books, and other productions of the same stamp, does not contain a copy of Hope's tasteful work on "*Household Furniture*." Still, such is the fact; and what is worse, it is by no means a solitary one. Frequently have I gone to the Museum with a list of about half-a-score of English publications that have appeared within the last half-dozen years, and sometimes have not been able to find even a single one of them. In some instances of works that have been brought out at different times, I have found the first "series," but not the following ones, or else the second or third, but not the preceding ones. If I mistake not, for I cannot at this moment speak positively as to any work in particular, such is the case with respect to Haghe's "*Belgium*," and Nash's "*Old English Mansions*." However, be it they or other publications of the kind, it is evident that there is great remissness in not making application to the publishers within the limited time. The consequence of such negligence is, the Museum library contains many broken series and sets. Speaking only on the report of others, I cannot vouch for the truth of it, but I have heard that within the few last years, several extensive purchases have been made by the Museum of both antiquated medical books and of Hebrew ones; neither of which classes will be thought to add to the usefulness of the library. What I can truly aver is, that my own collection of architectural works, small as it is, a mere drop in comparison with the boundless ocean of my wishes, contains several works that will be sought for in vain at the British Museum. I do not say that I feel particularly chagrined when, on turning over the catalogue for that purpose, I have ascertained that my own bookshelves contain treasures that are not to be found on those of our grand national repository, but I do say that a very sharp eye ought to be kept upon it; and were a sturdy besom to be employed to sweep away some of the rubbish, both animate and inanimate, which now encumbers the Museum, it would not be at all amiss. I say so, and you think so.

So yours, ad infinitum,

P.

THE "OCEAN MONARCH" AND THE FIRE ANNIHILATOR.

SIR,—You have made the public acquainted with the Fire Annihilator—both with its wonderful powers of extinguishing flame and the nature of its combustible materials, together with its mode of operation. Its stated moderate cost, and easy use and convenience, and also its safety, are satisfactory; but I am sorry to find on inquiry, that, although this useful and desirable object has been patented several years it is not yet to be purchased at any price. At a public meeting in St. Pancras, last Tuesday, where Lord Dudley Coutts Stuart, M.P., presided, we were informed that, for an outlay of five pounds, cost of the machines, (and a consumption of a few shillings only), four or five annihilators, thrown down between decks into the *Ocean Monarch*, would have at once converted the deadly vapours of the fire into innocent steam,—would have saved 173 lives, and have preserved as many more human beings from utter ruin and wretchedness, besides the preservation of 50,000*l.* worth of property. But, Mr. Editor, whose fault is it that *St.* have not been expended to so good a purpose? Does the law allow any one to tie up by patent that which is essential to the wellbeing of mankind? With the highest respect for ability, I cannot bring myself to think that it should be so, and I would press upon the gentleman who has made so great a discovery, that to disseminate health and happiness is far more meritorious than to make ingenious discoveries, and like Paracelsus, deny them to his fellow-creatures: I would even put it to him, how far may rest upon him the responsibility of every disaster from fire that, through his negligence or arbitrary proceeding, occurs nightly in this kingdom. In the hope that the horrors that surround us will soon be greatly mitigated by the ingenuity of man, and his zeal in the cause of humanity,—I am, Sir, &c.,

A PHILANTHROPIST.